

To: Ryan, Daniel[Ryan.Daniel@epa.gov]
From: Ferrell, Mark
Sent: Fri 2/7/2014 4:08:15 PM
Subject: Fw: JM3 op-ed text

Text below, Dan

From: Mark Ferrell <ferrell@newwave.net>
Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 11:07:10 AM
To: Ferrell, Mark
Subject: JM3 op-ed text

By Joe Manchin III

On Tuesday, I testified before a Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee hearing to discuss legislation that I drafted with Chairman Barbara Boxer to address the chemical spill that left more than 300,000 West Virginians without water and shut down thousands of businesses. After three weeks of hearing more questions than answers, I am reassured that this dire crisis has finally received the national attention it deserves.

A prompt congressional hearing is appreciated, but it is just the start. Let's seize this opportunity to raise the bar. I am asking all West Virginians to join me in a new and solemn pledge: I will do everything in my power as a member of the United States Senate, and most importantly as a proud West Virginian, to make sure that the water in West Virginia becomes the cleanest and safest in America.

The good people of the Mountain State deserve nothing less.

We need to come out of this disaster not only with confidence in our drinking water, but with resiliency for the future. I am asking my fellow West Virginians in addition to federal and state government agencies -- specifically, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection -- to make the same pledge.

In the Senate, I have worked on two commonsense pieces of legislation. Just days after thousands of gallons of crude MCHM leaked into the Elk River, I was grateful to have worked with Sen. Boxer, to introduce the Chemical Safety and Drinking Water Protection Act. The bill requires regular state inspections of all above-ground chemical storage facilities and more frequent inspections of those facilities located near drinking water sources. It also sets minimum federal standards that chemical facilities must meet, including construction and leak detection requirements, fail-safe containment standards, the development of emergency response plans and financial responsibility requirements.

Additionally, companies must inform the state, the EPA, and local water systems of the chemicals they store. However, that information is only helpful if we also have adequate health and safety data on these chemicals. That's why I have also cosponsored the Chemical Safety Improvement Act, which would -- for the first time -- require comprehensive testing of commercial chemicals. More than 80,000 chemicals are registered in the United States and are used by Americans every day, yet only about 200 have undergone EPA testing. The Chemical Safety Improvement Act would change that, by providing important information on chemicals such as MCHM, which tarnished our drinking water.

With that said, I understand that firsthand many Americans lack faith in government regulations. Too often, I have seen the federal EPA overreach its authority and hold some industries to a completely different standard

than others. All we've ever asked for is to be on a level playing field. As Governor of West Virginia, I even sued to stop the EPA from unfair permit regulations.

However, it is the responsibility of our government at both the federal and state levels to make sure our water supplies are clean and our drinking water is safe. And this is a situation in which the EPA can be a powerful partner.

The quality of our water is linked directly to the quality of our lives, and that is why federal and state governments, and the EPA, already invest annually in clean and safe water projects. So let's work together to make our number one priority to successfully rebuild West Virginia's water supply into the cleanest and safest in America.

The people of West Virginia have always shown so much resiliency. Through their hard work, sacrifices, and unwavering patriotism, West Virginians have always worked hard to build this great country.

We have endured many difficult and devastating challenges. There's no doubt that we will endure and overcome this challenge, too. May God always bless the great state of West Virginia.

Manchin is a U.S. Senator from West Virginia.